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How to Write Sales Letters and Email:

Write Direct Response Marketing Material to Inform, Persuade and Sell!

Paul Lima

How to Write Sales Letters and Email

- First Edition

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Introduction

Welcome to *How to Write Sales Letters and Email*—a book for those who want to understand the magic behind using writing and direct response marketing to promote a company, product, service, event, cause, or other item/issue.

If you want to master the craft of writing direct response marketing material that persuades, motivates, and sells, then this book is for you. It will guide you through the process of producing copy that works. You will discover how to write copy that captures the attention of readers, keeps them interested, influences their attitude and motivates them to take action.

While the book primarily covers the communication and writing process and sales letters and promotional email, it also looks at direct response marketing brochures and website landing pages, the online pages that you would direct people to using sales letters.

When it comes to sales and promotional writing, this book is meant to get you started, point you in the right direction, and help you avoid common mistakes many beginners (and some veterans) make. I hope to inspire you, to give you options to pursue, and to help you create a solid foundation upon which you can build.

Unlike many books on writing, this one does not promise to turn you into an overnight sensation. However, if you follow the hints, tips and techniques in this book, you will become a solid sales and promotion writer—whether you are writing copy for your own business or for clients, for a small or large business or a non-profit organization.

Paul Lima

www.paullima.com

Chapter 1 Getting Started

Writing is used in every major area of business, such as the writing of sales letters, brochures, business plans, websites, email, newsletters, reports, employee communications, and so on.

For the writing to be considered sales and promotion copy, it must be part of a communication that promotes goods, services, companies, organizations, or ideas to the public or to a business audience.

Any sales material targets a specific business or consumer group, also known as the target market. Often the message aims for the target market's heart—though the head and the wallet are of vital interest to the advertiser.

The target market is a defined segment of the market that is the strategic focus of a marketing plan. The members of this segment possess common characteristics and a propensity to purchase a particular product or service. Because of this, the members of this segment represent the greatest potential for sales volume. The target market is often defined in terms of geographic, demographic and psychographic characteristics.

The goal of sales, generally, is to inspire action. Sales copy, however, has a hierarchical function. Before a letter or email or any direct marketing or direct response promotion can inspire or motivate action it must:

- Capture the attention of the target market
- Hold the interest of the target market
- Alter the target market's attitude

Then, and only then, can it motivate the target market to take action—an action that is defined by the company sponsoring the promotion or the advertising campaign. That action, as we shall see, is not always “Buy now!”

While you could say that the main function of the ad is to motivate action, you

must capture the attention of the target market first. If you do not make the reader sit up and take notice, you will not be able to interest your audience. In other words, if you do not capture attention, then your audience will not hang around to absorb your message. If you fail to interest your target market, you will not alter their attitude—move them from unaware to aware, from negative to positive, from positive to a true believer. And if you cannot alter (or reinforce) attitude, you cannot motivate readers or viewers to take action—as defined by the purpose of your promotion.

Purpose of Promotion

Many people believe the purpose of any promotional copy is to sell. But how often have you seen an ad or received a promotion and immediately bought something? Not often, I'm sure. Otherwise, you would be shopping non-stop.

While the purpose of a promotion can be to sell, promotions are often used to plant seeds that germinate the next time a consumer is shopping or in need of something. They do this by educating, informing, and building brand awareness or positioning—associating a particular image or emotion (one that appeals to the target market) with a brand, product or service.

Sometimes the purpose of the promotion is to get the reader to take an action such as visit a website, call to have a sales representative visit, sign a petition or take some kind of political action, and so on. For the purpose of this book we will call any action a promotion motivates the reader to take as selling, even if no cash changes hands.

Test First

Time and budget do not always allow for the opportunity to test-market sales letters or other promotions. Once the final promotion is produced it should be

tested, if possible. The test can be as simple as showing the promotion to select current or prospective clients and asking them a few questions to determine how they feel about the promotion and what they think it is trying to motivate them to do. The test can be as complex as bringing together a focus group representing the target market and having folks in white coats hide behind one-way mirrors taking notes as a professional facilitator leads the group through a series of questions and conversations related to the promotion.

The key, if possible, is to get some feedback, and revise the promotion as may be required, before you mail or email your promotion to your entire list of contacts.

Chapter 2: The Importance of Creativity

My internal critic/censor is Mr. Conron, the grade five teacher who would not give me a pen (he made me use a pencil all year) because I could not spell well or write neatly.

Is it “i” before “e” or “e” before “i” except after “c” or when writing “weird” because that word is just ... well, wierd? Of course, my writing was messy because I could not spell! When you don’t know if it’s “i” before “e” you make a chubby “i” and a skinny “e” and put the dot right in the middle, hoping to fool the teacher!

Anyway, Mr. Conron wielded his red marker like the sword of Zorro, gleefully cutting huge red gashes across my mistakes. He never once commented on content or creativity. He just slashed at mistakes, as if perfect spelling and grammar are what writing is all about. There was no room for art or craft, just correct spelling and grammar. Oh, and neatness.

I battle Mr. Conron whenever I attempt to master the creative art of writing. When he rears his ugly head, I say, “Get thee behind me, Satan!” And I keep on writing—through typos and grammatical errors. Through incomplete sentences and incorrect words. I write until I have finished an error-filled first draft and then I laugh in his face. Because I have learned something about writing: Writing is a process. First you create. Then you correct. Mr. Conron (and Word’s automatic grammar and spell check) be damned!

Even before you create, there are steps you need to take to become a more effective and efficient writer. However, before we look at the writing process, answer me this: You, too, have an internal censor. Who is it? Take a moment. Identify your critic/censor. Name him or her. Give him/her a nickname (like Satan). Place your thumb on the tip of your nose and wiggle your fingers at him/her. Go on. Do it. Say your critic’s name (or names!) out loud and thumb your nose at your Mr. Conron....

There! Doesn’t that feel better?

Now ... pick up a pen. Find a sheet of paper. And write about your internal censor/critic. Write without stopping or correcting yourself. Screw spelling, grammar and neatness. Just write, write, write. Write as if you were freefalling—falling from an airplane without a parachute.

Nothing can stop you. Not grammar. Not spelling. Not Mr. Conron. Take five or ten minutes and write, write, write.... On your mark ... Get set ... Go!

How to Overcome Your Mr. Conron

Welcome back. Hope you are feeling okay... First, understand that writing is a process. Mistakes are part of the process. In the process, there is a time to create and a time to revise and correct errors. If you do not follow the process, Mr. C. will trip you up every time. He will get you revising or editing when you should be creating. He will cause you to waste time editing work that is not even at the first-draft stage. He will have you feeling frustrated and stupid.

Writing is difficult enough without Satan squeezing the last ounce of fun out of what should be a challenging but enjoyable creative art or craft. I use several creative writing exercises to bypass Mr. C. They help me focus on the creative aspect of the work. I save dotting the i's and crossing the t's for the last stage of the process—editing—and relegate Mr. C. to a small (but important) role as editor. In short, I lock him in a cupboard, feed him nothing, and only use him when I need him.

When you are creating, spelling and grammar do not count. There will be time for correcting later, once you have a concept and have completed a first draft. After all, who do you show the first draft to? (To whom do you show your first draft?) Nobody! Who cares if there are typos? Fix them later.

If you are working in a word-processing program like Word and you have your spell checker and grammar checker turned on, you are inviting Mr. Conron to inhibit your creativity. You are seeing and correcting so-called mistakes as you write—before you complete your first draft. In doing so, you are wasting time and losing your creative train of thought. Brain-storming, pre-writing exercises

and the first draft are for your eyes only.

With that in mind, turn off spell check and grammar check and get creating. Try the exercises below using pen and paper. There is something formal about neat rows of letters and words on the computer screen. They just seem to cry out for revision when you should be focused on creation!

Right-brain Writing and Pre-writing Exercises

Below are several right-brain (the creative side of the brain) writing exercises.

Freefall

Freefall has been called “writing without a parachute” or “stream of consciousness.” It’s ideally done using pen and paper rather than on the computer. With freefall, there is no goal or destination. You start without a beginning and do not have to end anywhere in particular. Just jot down the first thought that pops into your mind, followed by the next and then the next and then the next.... Write quickly, without stopping to edit or revise.

In other words, follow the stream of consciousness as it meanders through your mind. Write without censoring yourself, until you reach what feels like an end. Or not. Give yourself at least five minutes, if not more. If you find yourself stopping, keep the pen moving on the page. Use ellipses (...) or squiggles (or whatever marks you feel like using) until you tap back into the stream of consciousness and are off and writing again.

Experience freefall. Use a separate sheet of paper and just ... start ... writing! Try two five-minute freefalls. Take a short break between each one. Go....

Before you read on, freefall twice, for about five minutes each time.

Directed Freefall

Directed Freefall works like freefall, only you are given (or produce) an opening line to help direct your creation. However, as with freefall, there is no goal or

destination. Simply write as freely as possible, without censoring yourself. See where your writing takes you. Here are a several opening lines that you can use to kick-start your directed freefall:

- In the beginning was....
- In the old woman's face, I saw....
- It all ended the day....
- In the town where I grew up....

Pick a line. Jot it down, and freefall from there. Take five minutes and just do nothing else but write, write, write.... When your freefall seems to have come to an end, pick another line and go again...

Before you read on, try directed freefall using a couple of the above lines. Freefall for about five minutes each time.

Freefall hint: Before you begin writing anything important, freefall for five minutes. It helps clear the mind so you can focus on your task. Also, you might find inspiration related to your work.

Clustering

Now we're going to try clustering. A form of brainstorming (also called mind mapping or word association), clustering lets you brainstorm in a visual manner. When clustering, you jot down (using a specific method) all the words you associate with a given topic, keyword or phrase.

The goal is to get down on paper all you know and associate with your keyword. Once again, work quickly—without censoring yourself. That means you might jot down some words or phrases that seem “silly.” However, you never know where these so-called silly words will lead. So, whatever comes up, goes down!

How do You Cluster?

When given your keyword or phrase:

- 1/ Jot it down in the middle of a blank page, underline it and circle it.
- 2/ Draw a short line (more like a long dash) from your keyword and jot down the first word or phrase that comes to mind.
- 3/ Circle that word or phrase (optional).
- 4/ Draw a short line from that word or phrase, and jot down the next word or phrase that comes to mind.
- 5/ Repeat until you come to the end of the cluster string of associated words (in other words, until you go blank).
- 6/ Return to your keyword.
- 7/ Moving quickly, draw a short line from your keyword and jot down the next word or phrase that comes to mind.
- 8/ Circle that word or phrase, draw a short line from that word or phrase and carry on....

How many cluster strings should you create? It is up to you. The goal is to move as quickly as possible, without censoring, so you can get down as many words or phrases as possible that you associate with your keyword.

Why do you do this? Because it beats looking out the window waiting for inspiration to strike.

Clustering and freefalling are active forms of inspiring creative ideas. You are, in effect, mining for words and phrases that will help you develop your promotional theme and the copy you write.

If your concept (keyword) appeals to your target market, so will many of your cluster words. They help the target market identify with the product or service you are advertising and keep the target market interested or engaged.

Below is an example of clustering based on the keyword: clustering. Review the sample before you try a few of your own based on the keywords provided.



Here are several keywords you can use to kick-start your clustering:

- Apple
- Help
- Writing
- Summer (or any season you wish to use)
- Chocolate

Before you read on, try clustering several times using a couple of the above words. Cluster for about five minutes each time, or work until your clustering exercise feels complete.

Cluster/Freefall Combo

Clustering is an excellent pre-writing exercise. It can be used to fuel your freefall. Once you have completed a cluster (a cluster is complete when it feels as if it is finished), flip into freefall, and write without stopping. However, if you find yourself slowing down or running dry, glance quickly at your cluster to spark your writing.

Using one of the words above or below, try a cluster/freefall combination:

- Home
- Mother
- Hunger
- Travel
- Fear

Before you read on, try a clustering/freefall combination using one of the above words. Cluster for about five minutes and then freefall for about five minutes.

Chapter 3: Promotional Writing and W5

After doing right-brain creative work, you can get focused by going linear. To help you move from right-brain to left-brain thinking when faced with a writing project, ask yourself the kinds of questions a journalist would ask before writing an article. Ask yourself the W5 questions—Who, What, Where, When, Why (and sometimes How).

Get the answers down on paper before you begin to write. That way, when faced with a promotional-writing project, you will be working from your creative side plus your linear notes.

Once you are given a product or project to write about, complete the right-brain exercises, such as a freefall and clustering. Once you have done that, answer the questions below (write down the answers to make them real) before you start to write your copy:

- Who is advertising or promoting?
- Whom are you writing to? Who is your target audience?
- Who is the end user—consumer or business?
- Who are the early adopters and primary influencers? (Those most likely to buy a new product or service first and most likely to influence others to try it.)
- What are you advertising (product, service, cause), including actual name?
- What are the features and benefits associated with the product?
- What need and/or desire does the product fulfill?
- What need and/or desire should you create and associate with the product?
- Why does the target market need/want/desire the product?
- How does the product fulfill the need/want/desire?

- What makes this product different from its competition?
- How does the target market acquire the product or service?
- What action, if any, do you want the target market to take upon reading (hearing/viewing) this promotion?
- Why should they take it?
- What incentive (if any) are you offering to induce action?
- When does the incentive to action expire?
- Where does your target market go to take action?
- When can/should they do it? How?
- When/where/how is the product or service available?
- What guarantee is there that the product will live up to expectations generated by the promotion?
- How do you want the target market to feel after reading your promotion?
- “What’s in it for me?” (That’s your target market asking.)

Most promotions will answer most or all of these questions. It depends on the purpose of the promotion. Direct Response Marketing, be it a sales letter, sales email or landing page (website), tends to be meant to sell (or generate some kind of buy in and/or other action if you are promoting a cause) and will usually answer most of these questions. In short, you don't want to leave your reader with questions if you are trying to sell something. In addition, as the copywriter, you should know the answers to the questions before you begin to write so that you can consciously decide what to put in and what to leave out of your copy.

As mentioned, your promotion has to AIAA—capture Attention, hold Interest, influence Attitude and call for Action. If it doesn’t capture your target market’s attention, how will you create awareness of the brand, product, service or company you are promoting? But once you capture your target market’s attention, your ad must hold the reader’s interest if it is to develop, reinforce, or

change your target market's attitude, the way your audience feels about the promoted product. Most purchase decisions, even many business purchase decisions, are emotional ones. If you can't influence attitude, how are you going to sell anything?

Finally, your promotion has to motivate action. It's one thing to capture someone's attention and make someone aware of your brand and associate it with positive thoughts or feelings, but it is quite another to motivate someone to act.

Try doing all that in a creative vacuum. Not easy. Try doing it without answers to key questions. Not at all easy. And try doing it without a process—a formal approach to writing. Extremely difficult.

Your job is to answer the linear or W5 questions and apply creative brainstorming techniques so that you can develop a concept or hook on which to hang your copy (and image, if there will be both an image and copy). Then you write with your target market and purpose in mind.

Chapter 4: The Writing Process

Writing is a process. Most of us get hung up on correct spelling and grammar. That inhibits the process. Spelling and grammar count (although copywriters often break the rules for effect). But spelling and grammar are the last elements of the process. Preparation and planning come first. You become more effective and efficient if you follow the writing process. As one study found:

Efficient writers spend 40% of their time planning (preparation, research and organization), 25% writing and 35% revising.

Less-efficient writers spend more time overall on projects and distribute their time differently: 20% planning, 60% writing (tinkering, writing, tinkering), and 20% revising, tinkering, revising.

It may seem ironic to say you can become more efficient if you spend more time up front. However, the time you invest in planning pays dividends when it comes time to write and revise. Planning is your road map. If you plan a trip, you are more likely to reach your destination. You can still meander. However, if your meandering takes you nowhere, you will find it easier to get back on track because you have a plan, a road map and a process.

The Writing Process Includes

- Planning
- - Determine your topic
- - Establish your purpose
- - Identify and know your audience

- - Determine your scope (degree of detail required)
- - Select the appropriate medium
- Research
 - - Brainstorm to determine what you know
 - - Conduct research (background reading, Internet research, interviews) to gather what you need to know
 - - Take organized notes
- Organization
 - - Outline your points (topics) in the order in which they should be presented
 - - Create and integrate visuals, if required
 - - Consider layout and design
- Writing
 - Select appropriate point of view—first person (I), second person (you), third person (he, she, they)
 - Write a title (or headline and/or subhead)
 - Adopt appropriate style and tone
 - Use effective sentence and paragraph construction
 - Write an introduction and conclusion (for longer documents)
 - Write from topic point to topic point
 - Complete your first draft
 - Revision, Editing (proofreading)
 - - Check for completeness and accuracy

- - Check for coherence, clarity, conciseness and sentence variety
- - Eliminate jargon and clichés
- - Eliminate grammar problems and spelling mistakes
- - Share your document for feedback, or test it (if possible)

Planning

Establish your purpose or objective. Knowing your purpose will help you to conduct focused research, to include appropriate information, and to adopt a suitable writing tone.

Ask yourself: Why am I writing? To inform, educate, persuade, demonstrate how-to's, facilitate a decision, or recommend a course of action? For some other reason? What action do I want my audience to take? What do they need to know before they can act? What incentives can I offer them to motivate action?

Identify your audience. Are you writing to peers, superiors, subordinates, customers, suppliers, consumers, businesses, or a mixed audience? What is (are) your audience's expectation(s)? Do you need to know anything about your audience's age, income, education, occupation, profession, state of mind and/or health, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, interests, political/religious persuasion...? This information will help you conduct focused research, include appropriate information in the document, and adopt a suitable writing tone.

Determine your scope. What depth and breadth of detail do you need to cover the subject, fulfill your purpose and meet your audience's expectation(s)?

Select the appropriate medium. As the nature of your medium changes, so too does the nature of your message. Are you writing an email message, sending a fax, writing a letter, creating a web page or producing a video? Are you writing a case study, a detailed report, a technical manual, a

request for quote (RFQ)? Are you producing an advertisement for a newspaper or magazine, website, TV or radio broadcast?

Imagine trying to write without knowing what you are writing about, whom you are writing for, or the purpose of the document. Difficult to imagine, no? Before you start writing any other document, supplement your planning by asking:

- Whom am I writing for (target audience or target market)?
- What am I writing about (subject)?
- Why am I writing (purpose)?
- What action (desired outcome) do I want to occur?
- Who takes the action?
- When and where should the action take place?
- How does/should it happen?
- How can I motivate the action?

Research

Research internally. Jot down on paper all you know and all you need to know about your subject or the product or service you are writing about. Identify knowledge gaps to help focus your research. If you possess all the required knowledge, interview yourself before you write! Try Clustering as a means of accomplishing this.

Research externally. Do background reading, Internet searches, interviews. Fill your knowledge gap(s) by conducting purposeful research.

Organization

Outline your ideas (in relation to your medium). Your outline enables you to move swiftly, from point to point, in the right direction. Think of it this way: For long documents (say 2,500 words), you can attempt to fill ten blank pages or you can produce a 10-point outline and write 10 shorter sections. Which seems simpler to you?

Outlines are critical for Direct Response Marketing (DRM) pieces such as direct mail and email and website landing pages. Your outline would include all the points you want to hit, in the order in which you want to write about them. The objective is to know where you are going before you head out on the journey.

Do you want to see an outline in action? Look at the chapter headings for this book. They were all written before the text was written. Did the names of some of the chapters change as the book was being written? Yes. Did some chapters get broken in two? Yep. Were a few chapters shifted around? Actually, no. But it could have happened.

If that does not seem like much of an outline, look at the subheadings in each of the chapters. They were almost all in place before I began to write. I produced the outlines (there were several outline drafts) after completing planning and research.

I had an outline but there were several digressions and meanderings as I wrote. A few led nowhere and were deleted. Others were incorporated into the text. So, an outline does not stifle creativity. It allows for it.

Create and integrate visuals, if required. Do you require photos, charts, graphs or graphics to illustrate points? Plan to source or create them and include them in your document.

Consider layout and design. Graphic artists design advertisements. They work with illustrators and photographers. However, the copywriter can often suggest graphics. The headline can inspire the visuals, if written before the layout is done—but the execution of the layout is best left up to professionals.

In some writing, layout and design are not important elements. An email message, for instance, may be written in plain text. If, however, you are producing a document that is more than one page long, consider using headings, subheadings, bullet points and other simple layout elements to make it easier for your audience to read and understand your copy. If you are producing a publication (newsletter or magazine) or an ad, bring in a graphic designer.

Writing

Select an appropriate point of view (POV). Should you use first person (I), second person (you) or third person (he, she, they)? Seldom do you see ads in first person, unless someone is giving a testimonial. Even then, they will use second person (you) as well.

Perhaps something like:

The Filibuster 5000 changed my life for the better. It will change yours too. It brought me happiness beyond compare and I used to be a grumpy old man. Imagine what it can do for you....

Ads and promotions frequently use second person as a way of personalizing the message, as a way of trying to make one-on-one contact with the reader through mass media:

Aren't you glad you use Dial? Don't you wish everyone did?

Copy is often written in third person or in an impersonal manner, particularly catalogue copy:

Jockey Women's Medium-support Underwire Padded Bra. Seamless straps have $\frac{3}{4}$ " longer adjustment to allow for in-between sizing. Cup and sides designed to help avoid overflow and ride up. Nylon-LYCRA elastin microfibre. Adjustable straps and back hook closure.

To help select POV, ask yourself: "Who's talking?" Are you talking to the target market? If so, the writer would most likely use "you" but might also use third

person (most likely in catalogue copy, not a promotion).

Is it an existing customer talking to the target market? The customer might use “I” to tell his or her story, but “you” to make the ad appear personal—as if the customer were talking directly to the target market.

Adopt appropriate style and tone. Review your purpose, audience, scope and medium to determine if you should be casual, friendly, business-familiar or strictly business. Also, determine if you should be objective (presenting facts with no opinion) or subjective (expressing an opinion based on the evidence). Your writing can range from casual to strictly business. The more business-like the promotion, the more it projects an air of objectivity. Casual can be cool, depending on what you are promoting and your target market. Make a conscious decision about the tone you should use, and why.

Use effective sentence and paragraph construction. When it comes to promotional copy, “effective” may mean breaking some of the rules of grammar. For instance, you have probably been told that you cannot start a sentence with and, but or because. Or that complete sentences need a subject, verb and object. Poppycrack! Why? Because. And that’s all I’ll say. But if you want more information, read on.

Vary your sentence length and style so your copy does not become monotonous.

This is a simple sentence. On the other hand, this sentence, which is longer and uses clauses, is more complex.

The sentence mix should depend on your target market, copy length and design. Sentences should not be so complex that they interfere with understanding. Short sentences can help build excitement. And starting a sentence with “and,” for instance, emphasizes that you have something more to say:

It slices. It dices. It juliennes. And it comes with a one-year, money-back guarantee!

Complete your first draft. You might (will!) revise it after you complete your first draft, but first write swiftly from outline point to outline point.

Make sure spell check and grammar check are turned off. All they do is point out

mistakes before it's time to edit. They disrupt your train of thought and interfere with creativity. If you are producing a long document, take a break after you complete each section or several sections.

Revision, Editing, Proofreading

Edit your documents before sending them out. Go back to your planning notes and ask yourself if you have captured the purpose of the document using language that appeals to your target market. If not, review your notes and edit your document. Finally, proofread to correct any errors..

With promotional copy, you can break the rules of grammar. However, that does not mean you should break the rules of grammar. Break them consciously. When you revise, you can ensure that you have followed the rules of grammar or broken them for a particular effect. Break them too often in one copy block and you risk alienating your reader. And your copy will sound forced and insincere.

Print your document to proof it. You will be amazed at what the eye catches when working from the page as opposed to the computer screen. Read your work out loud as well. If it's awkward to read, it's awkwardly written.

Chapter 5: Target Market

If you don't know whom you are talking to, how do you know what to write? You have to know your audience or target market before you can perform (write) for that audience. If I am not in your target market, the chances of me reading your promotion, should I happen to get it, are slim to none. So don't try to target everybody.

For instance, if you are a wine drinker only, you are not going to buy beer—unless you are having a party and are buying all the alcohol for it. If you are a vegetarian, you are not going to buy meat. If you are an audiophile, you are not going to shop at Joe's Bargain Basement Electronics. And so it goes. Not everyone is in your target market. If you try to appeal to everybody, you will appeal to nobody.

Just because you are using a medium like direct mail or email that reaches your target market directly, your ad cannot be dull or boring. But it must be targeted. Just because you are mailing your message to law firms, it does not mean that the direct mail piece can be pedantic or uninspired. The recipient must still be motivated to open and read the direct mail piece.

The target market is often defined in terms of geography (physical location), demographics (age, gender, sexual orientation, income bracket and/or education), and psychographics (psychological traits, characteristics or lifestyle). Your promotion should resonate with the target market on an emotional and/or intellectual level. It should capture the attention of your target market and engage your audience. It should make your target market curious or otherwise aroused—emotionally, intellectually or even sexually. So keep your target market in mind when writing any promotion and appeal to the interests of your target market.

As Your Audience Changes...

I think you get the picture, but allow me to make one last point. As your target market changes, so too does your message—the points you want to address, the image you want to portray, your purpose, your concept, the action you desire and your overall writing tone and style.

For a computer or phone, in the case of a consumer audience, you might want someone to walk into a retail outlet and buy your product. But if they are not aware of your product, or if they think another product in the same category is more effective, less expensive or sexier, you might have to do some educating first. It all depends on how you compete against similar products in the category.

For a small-business audience, you might want an owner or office manager to walk into a retail outlet and buy your product; but you also might want someone from the company to pick up the phone and ask for a sales representative to visit, or you might want someone from the company to include you in a request for proposal (RFP). That too is what you might want the purchasing manager from a larger enterprise to do. But first you might want the director of information technology (IT) to call and talk to your sales representative about a demonstration of your product(s) and to discuss your service agreements before putting together the RFP.

If you think that makes sense for computer products or cell phones, but not for something as simple as apples, ask yourself how your copy for apples would change for the following:

- consumer audience, middle-class families of four
- consumer audience, health-conscious joggers
- consumer audience, health-conscious consumers who eat only locally grown organic food
- local green grocers
- national grocery store chains
- small local bakeries
- industrial packaged food producers

As your audience or target market changes, so does a lot of the pre-writing thinking you do, as does the actual copy you write, including your call to action, the sales device that tells the customer how to take the next step towards a purchase. Often it is accompanied by a time-limited incentive to act, something you might include in a P.S. in a letter. But more on that later in the book.

Chapter 6: The Poetry of Copywriting

Copywriting has become the poetry of our generation. On reflection, that is a sad thought. Allow me to rephrase it: Effective copywriting steals from poetry.

Take a moment and read this excerpt from the prose poem, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, by Dylan Thomas. Note: the italics in the poem are mine.

One Christmas was so much like another, in those years around the sea-town corner now and out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep, that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six.

All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged fish-freezing waves and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find. In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol-singing sea and out come Mrs. Prothero and the firemen.

It was on the afternoon of the Christmas Eve and I was in Mrs. Prothero's garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats. Patient, cold and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slink and sidle over the white back-garden walls and the lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes. The wise cats never appeared.

We were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffling silence of the eternal snows—eternal, ever since Wednesday—that we never heard Mrs. Prothero's first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden. Or, if we heard it at all, it was, to us, like the far-off challenge of our enemy and prey, the neighbour's polar cat. But soon the voice grew louder.

“Fire!” cried Mrs. Prothero and she beat the dinner-gong.

A poem tells its story through tightly woven images that relate to a central theme (concept or hook, if you will). All but two of the italicized words belong in the same thematic set that I’ll label winter or Christmas. Fire and fireman, being hot, may be perceived as opposites. However, being opposites—like black is to white—they, too, relate. Think of hot as it relates to Christmas (which occurs in winter), and you might think of candles, Yule logs and lights. All thematically connected.

I do not mean to diminish poetry by comparing it to advertising or promotional copy. Nor am I attempting to elevate copywriting. Effective copywriting starts with a concept or a hook whose theme runs throughout the copy. Same with good poetry. This theme, this golden thread that runs from start to finish, is the poetry of copywriting.

Of course, to be truly effective, all this happens while the ad or promotion relates to the reader’s needs or desires (real, perceived, or created by the advertiser).

Clustering Revisited

Remember the clustering exercises you did? One of the objectives of clustering is to help you get down on paper all the words and phrases that you associate with the keyword, generally your product. Clustering is meant to help you think without thinking, to help you create a thematic set of words that you can use in your copy.

Will you use all the words from your cluster? No. Will you add words that are not in your cluster? Most likely. Clustering gives you a starting point—a potentially poetic starting point. Any professional writer will tell you that they would rather start writing with something rather than nothing on the page.

Chapter 7: The Communications Process

Before we look at direct response marketing, let's take a moment to review the Communications Process. Just as writing is a process, so is communications. Communications requires a sender who sends a message through a channel to a receiver. It seems a simple enough process:

1/ I have information.

2/ I put it in an email.

3/ I send it to you.

4/ You receive it.

And that is how we communicate. Communication is a process. If you want to communicate effectively—in writing or when speaking—you should understand the process. The process is not complete, however, without feedback. Feedback closes the communication loop. Sometimes, noise (competing messages, distractions, misunderstandings) interferes with your message; feedback lets you know if the receiver received and understood your message.

When you communicate in person, you can ask for feedback: ask people if they understood or have any questions. However, when you communicate in writing or other one-way media (such as broadcast), it is more difficult to ask for feedback. Advertisers have learned how to use direct response marketing techniques such as discount coupons, time-limited offers and so on to motivate and measure feedback

Why Feedback?

Advertisers want feedback when they communicate so they can measure the

effectiveness of promotions. If they don't know how effective promotional campaigns are, how will they know whether they should run the same ads again, modify them, or scrap them and come up with something new? In short, advertisers use feedback to close the communications loop and complete the communications process. The nature of the feedback desired depends on the purpose of the promotion.

It may seem obvious, but allow me to state it anyway: If you don't know how effective your ad campaign was, how will you know whether you should run it again (in other words, spend more money on it)? How will you know if you should make adjustments to your ad?

Why can't the sender simply presume that the receiver has received the message? As mentioned, sometimes noise thwarts the communications process.

Where might noise thwart the receipt of the message if the receiver is:

- Watching TV?
- Listening to the radio?
- On the web?
- Receiving email?

I'm sure you've come up with a number of noise factors, such as:

- Using the remote to change channels when commercials come on
- Talking to someone while the radio is playing and not hearing the commercial
- Closing a pop-up ad before reading it or clicking on a free search-engine listing rather than a paid ad
- Having a spam filter delete legitimate electronic newsletters or redirect an email that the receiver has requested

The fact is, sometimes—often—your advertising message does not get through. It is the advertiser's job to solicit feedback so he or she can determine if the ad was effective. The copywriter cannot eliminate all the noise that might interfere

with the communications process; however, there are things you can do to solicit feedback and measure the effectiveness of an ad. But first you must know the purpose of the ad and the medium that the ad will appear in. Then you devise ways of soliciting feedback.

The means used to solicit feedback often change based on the medium and the purpose of the message. For instance, how might the means of soliciting feedback change if an advertiser sent an electronic newsletter to an email list rather than a direct mail flyer to a mailing list? How might the means used to solicit feedback change based on purpose—for instance, brand awareness versus sales?

If an advertiser sent an electronic newsletter to an email list, the advertising might request that readers click on a link to a website. Count the clicks, and you have feedback on your request. An advertiser who sends a direct mail flyer to a mailing list might ask recipients to call a toll-free number.

An advertiser who wants to solicit feedback based on an ad meant to raise brand awareness might survey a segment of the target market before and after the ad runs to determine if the ad has raised awareness. An advertiser interested in sales may look at store traffic and sales on the day the ad runs, and for a few days afterwards.

Gauging Versus Motivating

It all seems pretty obvious. If the purpose of the promotion is to motivate an action like visiting a website, then hits on the website constitute feedback. If the purpose is to get the audience to call for more information, then calls for more information constitute feedback. Likewise, if the purpose of an ad is to sell a product, then sales constitute your feedback. Run the promotion and watch your sales. If they go up while the promotion is running, deem it successful. If they remain the same or go down, deem it a flop.

But how do you know if your sales increase is tied to the ad? What if you sell umbrellas and it rains the day an ad appears? If sales go up, do you attribute the

sales increase to a stellar ad or to poor weather? How can you be sure? How can you accurately gauge feedback?

Allow me to now rephrase the question, because gauging feedback is not as important as motivating it. Oh, gauging is important. But if you do not motivate it, you will have little feedback to gauge. So, instead of asking how you can gauge feedback, answer me this: How do you motivate feedback, such as sales?

Motivating sales is different than gauging sales. Gauging sales is passive. Motivating sales is active. When you gauge sales, you find ways of relating sales to the ad or promotion. When you motivate sales, you use incentives to persuade people to give you feedback (take a defined action such as buy something).

Before you can motivate action, you have to capture attention, maintain interest and influence attitude, as we have said. But if you want action, it is your job to motivate it—to give your target market an incentive to act.

How can you motivate people to buy (or to take some other defined action such as visit a website or call to set up a meeting)? And how can you gauge feedback to see if your motivation worked? The two—incentives that motivate and gauging feedback—are interconnected.

There are a number of ways you can motivate sales. Allow me to outline a few techniques here that you can use. The technique you choose depends on your target audience, your purpose and your medium. Tools for motivating the completion of the feedback loop in the communications process include:

- Discount Coupons. Consumers like to do things, like clipping coupons. So promotions often include coupons that offer a certain dollar amount or percentage off, or two for the price of one. The coupons must be redeemed by a set time—that is the incentive to act now.
- Free Sample. This might be used in conjunction with a coupon, a toll-free number or a website. You give away a bag of chips in the hope that the consumer will, over time, buy dozens or hundreds of bags. Bring in the coupon, call the toll-free number, or visit the website and fill out the form, and get a free sample. Tim Hortons uses email to give away cookies and other products each month. You can bring in your smart phone with the electronic coupon on it and get your free cookie. Of course, Tim Hortons hopes you will buy a coffee or other products and come back at later dates and buy more products that the company

has given away. Like any effective incentive, these are time-limited offers.

- Free Product. Give away a cell phone or home alarm system to motivate the consumer to sign up for a three-year plan. There might not be a coupon, but the offer will expire by a certain time—all to motivate the consumer to act within a specified period of time. Of course the consumer then pays a monthly fee for cell phone use or alarm system monitoring.
- Free Quote or Estimate. The free quote or estimate is usually a no-obligation offer. Depending on the product, it may be limited by time, but often is not.
- Free Delivery. Online shopping is increasing daily. Often, one of the main objections to shopping online is the delivery fee. So offer free delivery. You might offer it for a short period of time to entice people to try your product, or you might offer it on sales over a certain dollar value.
- Free Trial. Often used when selling software online. The trial software might not include all the features of the commercial package, or it might operate for 30 days. Give away the first four months of a magazine subscription to motivate the consumer to sign up for a year—all the consumer has to do is mail in the subscription form or subscribe online.
- Contests. You can call a toll-free number, visit a website or send in an email to enter the contest. Or you can visit the store and fill out a ballot. The contest should appeal to the target market and relate to the product or services (or season in which the promotion appears). Again, don't forget the time-limited offer.
- Money Back Guarantee. Life is risky. We eliminate the risk with a 100% money-back guarantee. This is not so much an incentive to act now as it is a way to build trust. All the incentives in the world will not work, unless the consumer trusts the advertiser.

Chapter 8: Direct Response Marketing

As we have seen, the purpose of advertising is not necessarily to sell a product or service. However, there are times when generating the sale (or a lead for high-end, complex products) is paramount. When the purpose of the promotion is to close the sale or generate a specific response, advertisers frequently turn to direct response marketing (DRM).

DRM is a direct communication to a customer or business. Using mail, email, phone, fax or other media, DRM is designed to generate a response in the form of a sale, a request for further information, or a visit to a store or other place of business, such as a website. That response (or feedback) closes the communications loop and lets the advertiser know how effective the DRM promotion was.

To be effective, DRM must include all the information necessary to lead the prospect directly to an action. As we have seen, the DRM call to action frequently includes incentives to motivate the target market to act, and to act by a specific time.

Hook, Line and Sinker

The direct marketing brochure is generally printed in full colour on glossy stock. Often it runs several pages long and may include special die-cuts or folds. It is frequently mailed to the target market (often accompanied by a sales letter).

These days, many advertisers are cutting the costs of DRM by using email. Email used for marketing purposes is not spam—as long as the recipient has given the mailer permission to send such email. Permission-based email eliminates the cost of printing brochures and dramatically cuts the cost of mailing.

The DRM sales letter, brochure or email lands right in the hands (or in-box) of the target market. But that does not mean the target market will read it. DRM pieces still have to capture the attention and hold the interest of the target market. To do so, DRM uses the hook, line and sinker approach to marketing.

Hook. To hook the target market, the advertiser uses various landmark words the target market can identify with. For instance, if the advertiser is targeting lumber companies, the headline may play on a phrase such as:

You can't see the forest for the trees.

Add the word "now" and turn "can't" into "can" and you have:

Now you can see the forest and the trees.

Or pose a question:

Can you see the forest when looking at the trees?

Of course, the words forest and trees do not confine you to an audience of lumberjacks. See what happens if you are sending out a DRM brochure and add a subhead (below the headline) such as:

Balance your books to the penny,
and prepare your taxes in less than
half the time it takes you now.

Suddenly you are talking to a small-business audience, one that keeps books and prepares its taxes in-house.

Without a subhead, your readers have no idea what is being advertised—unless the headline is accompanied by an image that the target market can identify with or relate to on some level.

Generally, in business-to-consumer DRM, the job of the copywriter is to create desire and promise fulfillment. In business-to-business DRM, the job is to identify a problem and offer a solution.

As we will see, the incentive to act is actually part of the sinker. However, the incentive—or an allusion to an incentive—is often part of the hook:

Now you can see the forest and the trees.

And win a trip to the Rainforest!

Simply put your goal is to hook the reader (capture attention) and to get the reader to continue to read. When you consider all the other ads out there, and the noise that interferes with this goal, you have to work hard to hook your reader.

Line. The body copy, or line, reinforces how the product or service solves the problem, fills the need or satisfies the desire. It also builds trust by providing background information on the company conducting the promotion or the product being promoted and reassuring the prospect through guarantees, testimonials and the like. As well, it anticipates and answers any questions and overcomes any objections because people will not act if they have questions or objections. In addition, the body copy presents any other information the target market might need before they will take action, such as price, return policy and so on.

Sinker. This is the call to action. It tells readers what the advertiser wants them to do, how to do it, where to do it, and when to do it by.

The sinker generally uses a time-limited incentive to motivate the reader to buy the product, visit a website, call for a demonstration, make an appointment with a sales representative, fill out a survey that further qualifies the target market, and so forth.

Back to W5

To generate a response or close the sale, you have to motivate your target market to act. But you have to do more than offer an amazing incentive. You also have to tell your target market everything they need to know in order to respond.

What does the target market need to know? Go back to the W5 questions and

you will see many of the questions your target market is asking, consciously or subconsciously, as they read your DRM promotion.

Let's review some of the W5 questions from the target market's point of view:

- Who is advertising?
- What is being advertised (product, service or cause)?
- What are the features, assets and benefits associated with the product?
- What need/want/desire does the reader have for the product?
- What are the social/emotional/business benefits associated with the product?
- How does the reader feel after reading the promotion?
- What guarantees does the reader have that the product will live up to the expectations generated by the promotion?
- What action is the reader being asked to take?
- Why should the reader take it?
- What's in it for the reader?
- What incentive (if any) is being offered to induce action?
- When does the inducement to act expire?
- Where does the reader go to take action?
- When can/should the reader do it? How?

It is tough, almost impossible, to motivate your target market to take action without providing answers to those questions in a creative-yet-business-like manner that the target market can relate to. This is why direct response advertising typically uses more words than ads designed to build brand awareness.

The DRM Openings

Before writing business-to-business DRM material, the most useful background research you can do is to ask your typical prospect: “What’s the biggest problem you have right now?” That can also be the case in business-to-consumer DRM, although you might want to focus on the greatest desire or aspiration of the target market. However, you can still think of it in terms of problem/solution: If the target market cannot achieve his/her desires and aspirations, the target market has a problem. And that, for the advertiser, provides an opportunity to offer a solution.

The hook should address or allude to that problem—and offer or allude to a solution. Some time-tested openings for DRM brochures or sales letters include:

- Ask a provocative question.
- Go straight to the heart of the reader’s most pressing problem or concern.
- Arouse curiosity.
- Lead off with a fascinating fact or incredible statistic.
- State the offer up-front, especially if it involves money—saving it or receiving it. If you are offering something for an incredibly low price or making a free offer, say so.
- State the solution or problem up-front. If you are offering a solution to a problem, say so: “No more tangles!” Then outline the problem and state how your new hair conditioner solves it. Or start with a problem: “Tired of tangles?” Then detail the solution.

Below are some examples of DRM headlines that have produced solid results for advertisers.

An envelope teaser for a mailing that sold a manual on internal auditing procedures:

14 things that can go wrong in your company—

and one sure way to prevent them

From a subscription letter for Inc. magazine:

A special invitation to the heroes of American business

An envelope teaser for a subscription mailing for Financial World magazine:

Can 193,750 millionaires be wrong?

The lead paragraph of a fund-raising letter:

Dear Friend:

I'm fed up with the legal system. I want to change it and I think you do, too.

DRM Geography

In business-to-business DRM, the sales letter—not the outer envelope, the brochure or the reply form—is the most important part of the direct-mail package. However, you still need a powerful hook and an incentive, or at least an allusion to one, to get the reader to read the sales letter. (All things being equal, a DRM package with a letter will usually outperform a postcard, a brochure or an ad reprint mailed without a letter.)

Why do letters pull so well? A letter creates the illusion of personal communication. We are trained to view letters as real mail and brochures as advertising. Which is more important to you? A letter or an ad?

When it comes to getting the target market to open your DRM package, you need to know the hot spots or the geography of your direct-mail package. The hot spots are the spaces that get the most readership. Put your strongest selling copy in these spots:

- The front of the envelope

- The first paragraphs of the letter, its subheads, its last paragraph and the post-script (PS: 80% of readers look at the PS)
- The brochure cover, its subheads, and the headline of its inside spread
- Brochure picture captions
- The headline and copy on the order form or reply card

Magic Words

The magic words of DRM can dramatically increase response to your mailing. Often operating under the mistaken notion that the mission of the copywriter is to be creative, advertisers sometimes avoid the magic words of direct mail. They think the phrases are clichés. But clichés are familiar and people become engaged by the familiar. Just because a word or phrase is used frequently doesn't mean that it has lost its power to achieve your communications objective. In conversation, for example, "please" and "thank you" never go out of style.

What are the magic words of direct mail?

- Free. Are you giving away a brochure, report, consultation or gift? Say free brochure. Not brochure. Say free consultation. Not initial consultation. Say free gift. Not gift.

If the English teacher in you objects that "free gift" is redundant, say, Get thee behind me! A mail-order firm tested two packages. The only difference was that Package "A" offered a gift while Package "B" offered a free gift. Which ad did better? You guessed it. The free gift offered in Package "B" significantly out-pulled Package "A." What's more, many people who received Package "A" wrote in and asked whether the gift was free!

- No obligation. This is important when you are offering anything free. If prospects aren't obligated to use your firm's wastewater treatment services after you analyze their water sample for free, say so. People want to be reassured that there are no strings attached.

- No salesperson will call. If true, a fantastic phrase that can increase response rates. Most people, including genuine prospects, hate being called on by salespeople. Warning: Do not say “no salesperson will call” if you plan to follow up by phone. People will become angry and they will not buy from you.
- Details inside. A line like that should follow any teaser copy on the outer envelope to direct the reader inside.
- Limited time only. People who put your mailing aside for later reading will probably never respond. The trick is to generate a response now. One way to do this is with a time-limited offer, either generic (“This offer is for a limited time only”) or specific (“This offer expires Sept. 9, 2016”).
- Announcing or At last. People like to think they are getting in on the ground floor of a new thing. Making your mailing an announcement increases its attention-getting powers.
- New. “New” is sheer magic in consumer mailings. But it’s a double-edged sword in industrial mailings. On the one hand, business and technical buyers want something new. On the other hand, they demand products with proven performance. The solution? Explain that your product is new or available to them for the first time, but proven elsewhere—in another country, another application or another industry.

For example, if you introduced a diagnostic display system, advertise it as “new” to US hospitals, but explain that it has been used successfully for five years in leading hospitals throughout Europe.

In the next chapter we look specifically at the direct response sales letter and at email. The principles for both are similar, although there are some points that apply to sales email alone.

Chapter 9: Direct Response Sales Letter/Email

Sales letters are used to sell something to someone. In order to sell you have to persuade the reader to take action. If you are selling an expensive (or complex) product or service—an IT solution, a backhoe for commercial construction use, accounting and auditing services—the action you desire might not be “buy” even though you are writing a sales letter because people don’t purchase expensive and complex products off the shelf the way they buy DVDs, books or socks.

You might, instead, want the reader to take a pre-purchase action—call for more information, visit a website, arrange for a sales representative to call, and so on. In short, before you write a sales letter or email, or any copy meant to persuade, you need to know what action you are trying to persuade the reader to take. If you don’t know your purpose and the action you want the reader to take, how can you achieve your purpose and motivate the reader to take a particular action?

As previously stated, anytime you want anyone to do something—even attend a meeting—you are “selling” and you have to motivate the person to act or respond (buy into what you want, so to speak). Knowing what you want the reader to do, and motivating the reader to do it, is at the heart of any persuasive message—such as advertising and direct response marketing copy—and the focus of this chapter is on sales letters, email and proposal cover letters.

The sales letter (and email too, unless otherwise stated) does the following:

- Lets the reader know your purpose—why you are writing
- Introduces you to the reader and makes a connection between you (your company, your products and/or your services, or your proposal) and the reader’s problem, issue, opportunity, need or desire
- Demonstrates that you understand your target market and their objectives and, depending on the circumstance, how what you are selling or proposing relates to their objectives
- Extols the virtues of your company, products and/or services, or summarizes

(and extols the virtues of) your proposal

- Calls for a defined action
- Uses an incentive to motivate the reader to act

Three-section Sales Letter

Sales letters and proposal cover letters should be divided into three sections:

Introduction

- Hooks the reader (captures attention) with a line (or lines) that relates to a problem, issue, opportunity or situation the reader is familiar with or can relate to; in email, this starts with your subject line
- Makes clear the purpose of the letter

Body

- Holds the reader's interest by proposing a solution, alternative, or means of exploiting the opportunity or fulfilling the need or desire
- Overcomes anticipated objections and answers questions the reader will have (major attitude adjustment technique)
- May include rationale for and/or benefits of proposal
- May include schedule (timelines) and a detailed projection of costs (proposed budget)

Conclusion

- Calls for action and outlines next steps and how to take them; details who should do what for whom, when, where and why

- May offer an incentive to motivate the reader to act
- Demonstrates willingness to answer questions or provide more details

Post Script

- The P. S. reinforces the most salient point(s) and (often) the incentive or adds an important, additional related point

You might use attention-grabbing subheadings that create distinct sections in a sales letter, but you do not have to. Either way, you should be aware that the role of each section, as described above, is distinct. In addition, you need to write so that there are logical transitions between sections and a logical flow from section to section.

Cold-call Sales Letter Example

Let's look at a cold-call sales letter. Also known as an unsolicited sales letter or direct response marketing letter, a cold-call sales letter is a letter you send to someone who has not requested it. Some people term unsolicited letters "junk mail." Such letters might feel like junk mail to consumers who are bombarded with unsolicited credit card applications and sales flyers; however, they wouldn't be sent out with such frequency if they didn't work enough to justify their use. In addition such letters are a staple of business-to-business communication. They are often used to make initial contact with a prospect or to generate leads for a company's sales force, as in the sales letter example below.

Note: If you send your sales letter by email, and you do not have permission to email a business or consumer, it will be considered spam and will most likely be deleted, no matter how legitimate your business is. Building email lists and using permission-based email marketing go beyond the scope of this book; however, if you are planning an email marketing campaign, make sure you investigate how to properly build permission-based email lists. There is a bit more on this and other email factors towards the end of the chapter.

Dear Ms. Bussman:

Are you having trouble keeping your cool? When you turn on the air conditioning, do you feel as if you are wasting energy and money? PLR Air Conditioning would like to demonstrate how we can help you keep cool and save energy too—all for less than you might have imagined.

We would like to demonstrate how the installation of a PLR air-conditioning system will keep your plant and office cool and reduce energy costs. The demonstration takes 45 minutes, and it will not disrupt your business operations.

We believe that you will find PLR systems to be practical, efficient and economical.

PLR has been in the industrial heating and air-conditioning business for over 40 years, servicing companies like yours. We are a member of the Better Business Bureau and have a stellar credit rating. You can view our client list and read a number of testimonials on our website, www.plr.com.

Please review the information in the enclosed brochure and call us for a demonstration. What do you have to lose? Certainly not your cool! To set up a demonstration, call 416-555-5555.

Sincerely,

James P. Callahan

Sales Manager

P. S.: If you call us by May 31, we will conduct a free energy audit and show you 10 no-cost ways to cut your company's electricity bill.

Components of a Cold-call Sales Letter

Now, let's examine the component parts of the sales letter.

Introduction: The letter starts with humour (risky, I confess) to capture the attention of (hook) the reader. If this were sent out as an email message, there

might be a subject line like: Keep your cool and save money too. Notice how the word “cool” used in the introduction is related to the product, and how quickly the writer connects the opening line to the product—connects cool to air conditioning. By the third sentence, the reader knows exactly why the writer is writing (purpose)—to conduct a demonstration. Notice how the purpose is supported by a benefit statement implying cost savings. In other words, the writer is supporting his purpose by letting the reader know that PLR can solve a problem.

Are you having trouble keeping your cool? When you turn on the air conditioning, do you feel as if you are wasting energy and money? PLR Air Conditioning would like to demonstrate how we can help keep you cool and save energy too—all for less than you might have imagined.

Body: Once the purpose is established, the body expands on it while maintaining interest and influencing attitude. The body overcomes a possible objection: this will probably take all day. No, it “takes 45 minutes.” It also focuses on information that is of interest to the client by promising to “reduce the cost of energy,” and to be “practical, efficient, economical.”

We would like to demonstrate how the installation of a PLR air-conditioning system will keep your plant and office cool and reduce the cost of energy. The demonstration takes 45 minutes, and it will not disrupt your business operations.

We believe that you will find PLR systems to be practical, efficient and economical.

The company also uses the body to build trust, just in case the reader is wondering who the heck PLR is.

PLR has been in business for over 40 years, servicing companies like yours. We are a member of the Better Business Bureau and have a stellar credit rating. You can view our client list and read a number of testimonials on our website, www.plr.com.

Conclusion: Here the letter asks the reader to do something—read a brochure and make a call. The writer would be happy if the reader just called, but if the reader is interested, but not quite convinced, she can review additional information in the brochure. The conclusion succinctly summarizes what the letter has been about and echoes the opening, as if reminding the reader what

caught her attention in the first place:

What do you have to lose? Certainly not your cool!

The conclusion is expanded in the P. S., which offers the reader a limited-time incentive to act. By May 31, PLR will know how effective its cold-call sales letter was. If the company sends out two hundred letters and has 10 or 20 replies, the letter would be considered a direct mail success. With that in mind, if you are ever conducting a direct mail campaign, sample your audience first. Say you want to send out two thousand letters. Send out a hundred letters first and gauge the response. If you come up empty, you will want to review and revise your sales message.

Follow-up Sales Letter

In the post-demonstration sales letter, the same principles apply. The writer does not have to work as hard at hooking the reader but must still capture the reader's attention. Analyze this letter to see how its structure adheres to the introduction, body and conclusion methodology of writing persuasive sales letters.

Dear Ms. Bussman:

We hope you were able to see how PLR air-conditioning systems would provide energy efficiency, cool comfort, and the maximum return on your investment when we demonstrated the system for you on June 15.

We would like to thank Mr. Lindsay and Mrs. Smooth from your operations division for joining us for the demonstration.

As discussed, the equipment PLR proposes to install is modular in design, so you can add additional units as the need arises. This makes it practical, efficient and economical, both now and in the future. Therefore, the system protects you against obsolescence as your business continues to grow.

I will follow up on the attached proposal on June 30. The information it provides should answer any pricing and timing questions you might have. However, if

you require additional information before then, please call me. In addition, I have attached your free energy efficiency audit results showing you 10 no-cost ways to cut your energy bill.

Sincerely,

James P. Callahan

Sales Manager

Proposal Cover Letter

If your company issues proposals, perhaps in response to a request for quote (RFQ) or a request for proposal (RFP), you should write a proposal cover letter. The sales letter principles apply to proposal cover letters; however, the action you want the reader to take is to read your proposal, not call or buy—at least not until they've read the proposal. The proposal itself will call for more specific action.

Think of your proposal cover letter as you would an executive summary of a report. Your cover letter is your opportunity to summarize your proposal in a way that motivates the letter reader to read your proposal.

Using the introduction/body/conclusion format, your proposal cover letter (or cover email if you have permission to email your proposal, perhaps as a PDF file) should tell the reader that there is something they need to know in the proposal accompanying your letter or in the attached file.

Many companies write skimpy proposal cover letters or do not include cover letters with proposals. I am not going to say that their proposals will never be read; however, there may be times when a busy executive shoves such proposals to the bottom of the pile or simply bypasses them.

In other words, imagine if you had a stack of proposals in front of you, and a limited time to read them. You would glance briefly at the cover letters and separate the proposals that were of interest from those that were not, based on

the cover letters. In short, a well-structured, well-written proposal cover letter can motivate the reader to read your proposal.

Let's look at a proposal cover letter (below) set up in full-block style. It can also be sent as an email but I am using letter format here. The Canadian Apple Growers Association (CAGA) wants to hold a fall fair in New York to promote its newest apple, the Ambrosia, and Central PR is submitting a bid to promote the event.

Central PR

123 Any Street, Toronto, Ontario M6R 1K7

416.555.1212 - pr@centralpr.com

June 3, 2008

Mr. Johnny McDonald

President

Canadian Apple Growers Association

123 McIntosh Boulevard

Milton, Ontario, L6T 1X4

Dear Mr. McDonald:

Take a bite out of the Big Apple—Ambrosia Style!

That is what Central PR proposes to help the Canadian Apple Growers Association do as we promote the exciting New York City unveiling of the Ambrosia apple. Central PR will promote your Canadian-style Fall Fair in Central Park and manage the event for you.

For one low price, as outlined in the enclosed proposal, we will:

- Write and issue the media release to promote the Fair
- Compile an accurate list of media attendees

- Create the media kit
- Welcome media at the event; arrange interviews with reporters
- Track all media hits connected with your event
- Calculate the media exposure value for the CAGA

You want this event to be as unblemished as the Ambrosia, and Central PR is the agency to ensure the PR for the Fall Fair runs smoothly. Central PR has been in the public relations business since 1999. We have successfully staged media events in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Los Angeles and New York City. From fashion to fruit, we have the experience to promote your association.

The enclosed proposal details the publicity agenda we are proposing for the Canadian-style Fall Fair. In addition, it includes suggested dates for the event, timelines that will enable you to successfully promote and stage the event, a list of the duties and responsibilities that Central PR will cover on your behalf, a full budget, bios of our executive team and testimonials.

After you read our Fall Fair proposal, feel free to call me with any questions you may have. I will call you by the end of June to set up a meeting to discuss this exciting opportunity to represent the CAGA, as the Ambrosia apple prepares to make its debut in the Big Apple.

Sincerely,

Nadine Leclair

Marketing Manager

Central PR

As the reader, do you feel Central PR understands your promotional objective? Do you feel the PR agency possesses the ability to help you organize and promote an event that will help you achieve your objective? If so, you will read the proposal. If the proposal is sound, and the price is right, you will accept the call and set up a meeting.

“Sale” achieved, even though you have not yet bought anything.

You would not, in fact, buy this PR service without a meeting. If Central PR is not able to sell you on the concept of the initial meeting, it cannot close the actual sale. In other words, sometimes you have to achieve a preliminary purpose before you can achieve your ultimate purpose. Keep that in mind when you are writing a sales letter or any document.

Sales Letter Exercise

See if you can put the sales letter writing principles into effect by writing a sales letter or proposal cover letter.

If you don't have anything to write about, but want to try this exercise, produce a sales letter or proposal cover letter based on the Chez Restaurant case study below.

As with the letter above, pretend that you are a public relations firm responding to a request for proposal to stage the event outlined in the case study. Or you might pretend that you are a PR firm that is seeking new business. Part of your business plan calls for you to develop and pitch PR ideas to companies that have upcoming events—such as the launch of the Ambrosia apple or the grand opening of Chez Restaurant. In other words, you can pretend that you writing a cold call sales letter or that you have been asked to submit a proposal to solicit PR work for the grand opening of Chez Restaurant.

Either way, your letter should capture the reader's attention, hold his or her interest, influence the reader's attitude and cause the reader to take a specific action. Do this with a sales letter that has three distinct sections—introduction, body and conclusion—and smooth transitions between each section.

Before you start, ask yourself a couple of questions:

- What's in it for the reader? Your letter should answer that.
- What is the action that I am trying to motivate? Your letter should build to asking for the order or the action you want to take place.

Chez Restaurant Case Study

Henri Blanc is hiring a public relations agency to promote an event in Toronto to attract media attention and to create awareness about the grand opening of his new upscale French bistro, Chez Restaurant, in Yorkville, a chic location.

Background information: There are more restaurants per capita in the City of Toronto than in almost any other city in North America; competition among high-end restaurants is fierce. Chez Restaurant has a prime location, valet parking, and a Cordon Bleu chef, Michel Boeuf. He was trained in Paris, France, where he worked for 20 years in five-star restaurants.

Your menu is world class, as is your décor. Your prices reflect your chef, menu, and the dining experience, which is private, personal and exquisite. You expect to attract celebrities, CEOs and deal-makers to the grand opening and beyond.

The idea: To invite selected media—business editors and restaurant reviewers—to a grand opening gala party featuring fine finger foods and wine tasting. Jazz singer Michael Bublé would provide the entertainment. The event would include brief presentations by Blanc and Boeuf. The gala will be held the day before the opening of the Toronto International Film Festival; a number of movie stars, producers, and directors will be in town and could accept invitations to the opening.

The invited media and guests will receive private invitations. There will be a grand opening gala, complete with celebrity red carpet. The goal is to create buzz with a big splash outside the restaurant—fans and media lining the red carpet; lots of red carpet photo opportunities—while providing guests with an intimate and private experience inside the restaurant.

Your task: Reply to a request for proposal seeking an agency to stage this event or send a cold-call sales letter pitching your PR agency as an agency that could promote a grand-opening event.

What About Direct Response Email Marketing?

Direct response email marketing is less costly than printed DRM material that is mailed to the target market.

Long considered a lightweight in the advertising world and often confused with spam, email marketing has come a long way. However, it has a long way to go to reach the magnitude of the traditional DRM industry. The billion dollars (and growing) spent on email marketing in 2014 may seem paltry in comparison with the \$200-billion direct mail market, but email is gathering momentum while direct mail seems to have peaked.

The reason? Primarily cost. Email campaigns cost \$5 to \$7 per thousand, compared with the \$500 to \$750 (or more) per thousand for direct mail. As well, email marketing campaigns are quicker to execute than mail, they get faster results and their success (or failure) can be measured more easily (by click-throughs and sales).

Email marketing is not spam, if used on an opt-in or permission basis. However, there are risks to sending DRM email. Email users are so overwhelmed by spam these days they use filtering techniques to keep it out of their in-boxes, so DRM email may be caught in spam filters. Occasionally, email users forget they granted permission for a marketer to send them email and they may view the DRM email as spam.

The challenge for email marketers is to make the message so relevant to the person receiving it that it is not confused with spam. And the offer must be compelling enough to make the recipient act on it. Action can be a sale, an exchange of money for a product or service, but often with email marketing the action is to visit a website (landing page) for more information.

A landing page is similar to a DRM brochure in that it tends to have all the information required to complete the sale. Again, a sale is typically an exchange of money for a product or service, but it can be anything the advertiser requires it to be: download free software, set up a meeting, make a donation, sign a petition, and so on.

Email marketers should:

- Use strong, provocative or self-explanatory subjects lines
- Keep the message to one computer screen (page)
- Include a link to a website for more information
- Include an incentive to click on the link
- Include unsubscribe information
- Ensure those who unsubscribe get off the list

Chapter 10: DRM Brochure

When the TV show, Survivor, became a hit, Rogers, a Canadian cable TV company, sent a direct response marketing (DRM) brochure to homes in areas where Rogers offers cable service. Allow me to qualify that: They sent it to homes without cable in areas where Rogers offers cable service. (Why would the company send an expensive, full-colour brochure to existing Rogers cable clients?)

The brochure used the following headline:

Why Survive without Cable?

Get connected and join the cast today.

When the reader opened the brochure, they were greeted with a pop-up incentive:

Order Rogers Cable service before March 15, 2003

and your installation is FREE.

PLUS! Enjoy your first two months at 1/2 price!

Of course, the call to action immediately followed:

To order, call < number>... Or order online at <website>.

It was a timely and topical pitch with a solid incentive meant to motivate action, and it was aimed directly at Rogers's target market—those without cable. The brochure's graphics were very tropical and supported the copy. In short, the copy and graphics supported the concept that might be summed up as: to survive (be fulfilled, live a full life), you need cable.

Accept or reject the concept, that's your choice as a consumer. But appreciate how the graphics and words work together to make the concept real, and how the direct response mailing is sent to those most likely to buy—consumers without

cable who live in areas served by Rogers.

If you are not into heavy-duty construction equipment, the next DRM headline will not appeal to you. Why should it? You are not the target market. However, if you are a heavy-duty construction kind of person, you will dig it, so to speak.

MEET THE BACKHOE LOADER

YOU'LL BE PROUD TO HAVE ON YOUR STAFF.

This headline personifies the product, turning it into a hard-working member of the staff. This product is someone, rather than something, you would be proud to have on your team. Just so you know, the image that accompanies the headline shows the backhoe working hard at a construction site. However, a picture and related headline may not be enough to entice the reader to open the brochure. So what does Volvo, the backhoe manufacturer, offer on the front page of the DRM piece?

LOOK INSIDE FOR YOUR CHANCE

TO WIN A CRUISE FROM VOLVO!

In short, Volvo offers an incentive to get readers to open the direct mail brochure. How do readers qualify for a chance to win a cruise? As you will see, the incentive is tied directly with Volvo's call to action—schedule a demonstration—or what the company wants the reader to do.

A backhoe is an expensive product and a complex sale. People don't just call up and say, "I'll take two, please." Volvo knows that closing the sale takes personal contact. So the call to action is not "Buy now!" The call to action is: Schedule a demonstration. Readers can do this online "and be entered into the Choose Your Cruise Contest."

To ensure readers act sooner rather than later, the incentive is followed by an expiry date. The offer expires about a month after the date the flyer was mailed.

In four weeks, Volvo will have feedback. The company knows how many brochures were mailed and it will know how many demonstrations were scheduled. No doubt the company will track sales based on demonstrations scheduled as a result of this mailing. In short, based on feedback motivated by an

incentive, Volvo will be able to determine if the direct response mailing was successful. Or not. If it was, they can repeat similar offers. If not, they can go back to the drawing-board and revamp the DRM piece.

Let's take a look at another DRM brochure. On the cover we have the following:

Your FREE month is waiting for you!

That's all it says. Full stop. As the consumer receiving this, you have no idea from that line (there is no graphic on the cover) what product or service is being promoted. The question is: Are you motivated by this incentive to take a look. I'd suggest that most people would at least take a quick look. If the product or service was something they were interested in, they'd read on.

Of course, the call to action, after the body copy, for the offered phone and Internet service includes a reminder of the incentive on the cover that motivated you to look:

Sign up today and receive one month FREE!

In case you have that typical objection that most consumers have when they see an offer like this—"I bet I have to lock into a long-term contract to get the free month"—there is an short, direct, attitude-adjusting line that overcomes that fully anticipated objection:

Contract-free!

So, as you have seen, there are many ways to motivate a reader to read and too act. But they all involve some sense of an attention-grabbing hook and incentive, a hook that implies an incentive, or an incentive that hooks you.

DRM Body Copy

DRM letters and brochures tend to be copy heavy, but they are also designed for easy reading. They have to provide the reader with all the information the reader needs to take action, but they must also look like they are easy, not a chore, to

read. With that in mind, let's look at how some DRM body copy presented information while building on the headline.

Here is a headline from a Grocery Gateway direct mail piece:

Let us deliver your groceries

And we'll save you \$20

Through a solution, the headline alludes to a problem: Who has time to shop? The solution is to let Grocery Gateway deliver. And, of course, the incentive is front and centre.

Open the brochure and what do you see?

You have more important things to do than go grocery shopping.

We don't.

The copy immediately picks up on the theme established by the headline on the cover of the brochure. The copy continues:

We're GroceryGateway.com. We're committed to helping you simplify your life by taking away one weekly chore—your grocery shopping. We know you've got more important things to do with your time. Let us fill the pantry and fridge for you. We carefully select, pack and deliver your whole shopping list right to your door (or even your kitchen counter if that's where you'd like it).

Notice how the theme continues with “simplify your life” and “taking away one weekly chore.” Also, though, notice how the copy builds trust by anticipating and overcoming objections. In case you think nobody will treat your groceries as well as you do, the copy informs you that “We carefully select, pack and deliver....”

One of the major objections to shopping online for groceries concerns the quality of produce and meat—products shoppers like to see before they buy. If the copy did not address that objection, it could not close the sale. How does the copy address the objection? It poses the question that's on the mind of the reader and then answers it. Notice how the writer has fun with the answer and how that fun places particular emphasis on the answer while causing the reader to smile (to

become engaged in the copy):

Fresh produce and meat online?

We're particularly picky about our perishables. We know you demand the freshest food and highest quality for your family. All our fruits, vegetables and meats are expertly sourced by industry professionals and kept in our Market Centre at their optimal temperature for freshness. After all, a bruised tomato will bruise our reputation.

The copy goes on to describe how the prices are competitive with the average grocery store in Toronto (this was mailed in Toronto), how there are weekly specials, what the minimum order is, what delivery fee is charged, and acceptable methods of payment—including credit cards. In other words, there are no inconveniences to shopping online. Objections overcome. And you don't have to travel. Advantage delivered.

If you still have doubt, there is the promise:

Our Promise

We are here to make your life simple, not more complicated. If something isn't right with your order, we'll fix it. Guaranteed. We stand behind our service, our people and our products with a 100% satisfaction guarantee. Go on. Let us help. What do you have to lose, except one more chore?

Notice how "guaranteed" is a one-word sentence. For emphasis. And how the copy concludes with a reference that takes you back to the beginning—in case you forgot how you got hooked and why you are actually reading a piece of so-called junk mail. Much like poetry, it comes full circle!

You shop online.

We deliver.

Now this is progress.

There is an email address, phone number and website for those who may have questions. Of course, there is a code to enter when shopping online to save \$20, and an expiry date on the offer to motivate readers to act sooner rather than later.

In Summary....

Before you begin writing direct response copy, ask yourself the following:

- Whom am I going to sell to?
- What is my purpose?
- How do I get the reader to open the envelope, flip open the brochure or open the email?
- What are the features and benefits of what I am selling (even if you are requesting a charitable donation; be creative)?
- What objections might I meet? What do I say to overcome them?
- What is required to build trust?
- What action do I want the reader to take?
- How do I motivate action (within a given period of time)? What incentive do I use to motivate action?

But We're a Charity!

I often get the “we’re a charity” objection to DRM.

Even if you are promoting a charitable or political cause, the process is the same. You still need to capture attention, hold interest, influence attitude, issue a call to action and motivate action. If you are a charity, you might not offer me a vacation or a discount to motivate me to act, but your incentive should be there and it should be appropriate to who you are, who your target market is, and what

action you want your target market to take.

I've had some non-profit organizations tell me that they have no incentives to offer. While you cannot give a discount on a donation, can you say that the person will feel good if they donate? Can you offer to list donor names on your website? Can you tell the potential donor how their contribution will make a difference? What else can you do? It's up to you to think creatively and to come up with an appropriate sinker. Try to get into the heads of your donors and find out what they want, and then build an incentive that motivates them to act.

Chapter 11: Web-based DRM

When it comes to direct response marketing and the web, all the rules apply—more or less. What’s cool about the web is that prospects often find you using Google or other search engines. They enter keywords related to your product or service, and up pops a link to your website or an ad on Google, Yahoo! or Bing.

The searcher, who has pre-qualified himself or herself by entering keywords related to your product, service or cause, clicks on the link and lands on your home page or any other page you have optimized to show up in a search engine, based on specific search terms.

If the searcher clicks on a Google ad—known as AdWords—the ad should take the prospect to what is known as a landing page—your online DRM page—not to your home page.

What is the difference between a home page and a landing page? A home page has a web address such as www.yoursite.com and generally includes links to all the main pages on a website. A landing page might have a web address such as www.yoursite.com/product-info and is set up to solicit a direct response from a prospect that lands on it after clicking on a link (perhaps in a solicited email message) or an online ad.

While the landing page does not have to include all the elements that a DRM brochure requires, a landing page and pages it links to can offer much more information than DRM brochures because a landing page offers the hotlink advantage. In other words, instead of including every detail required to close the sale on the landing page, the hotlink advantage lets you incorporate links on your landing page that visitors can click on for more information. For instance, you can create a link from the landing page to a full list of features and benefits, or to the complete details of your guarantee.

Having said that, some advertisers believe you should put everything you want to say about your product on the landing page, rather than linking to other pages. That tends to work best in business-to-consumer marketing. In business-to-business marketing, you can use hotlinks to your advantages, turning your

landing page into a micro website that closes the sale, however you define sale.

Whether you include all the copy required to close the sale on the landing page or on the landing page and on various hot-linked pages, you still need a hook, line and sinker. However, the first thing you need is a call to action, perhaps in conjunction with a sinker (incentive to act). Think about it. The visitor to your landing page is a hot prospect. He or she pre-qualified by using keywords related to your product and clicked on a Google ad or search engine link about your product or a link in an email message. Why wouldn't you offer the visitor a way to buy—a link that says “Buy Now!” or at least “Try Now!” (if you are selling software, for instance)? If the visitor is a hot prospect, he can buy. If she is just curious, she can continue to read your landing page copy.

Busy as a Bee

Below is the landing page for U-Rent-It Manager (URIM), a party/event rental and small equipment rental order-entry and reservation software system. (The application is real; the name has been changed.)

If you have ever rented equipment or tools, you probably feel lucky if the reserved equipment is there when you show up. The equipment rental staff are running around like chickens with their heads cut off and you wonder if they actually know what they are doing. These folks are busy, no doubt about it. But are they organized?

The U-Rent-It Manager application claims it will organize inventory and staff so that rental customers get the products they have reserved. URIM has a Google AdWords campaign. The ads take the prospect to the URIM landing page, where the first thing visitors see is a link to a 30-day free trial offer for the application. Click on the link and you see guarantees and other trust-building copy, as well as a link to the terms and conditions (kept as simple as possible) and, of course, the download link.

The sales offer is put up front because visitors have prequalified themselves by using keywords to search for such a product and just might want to buy it. So

why not make it easy to buy, or at least try? But what if the visitor still needs convincing? The landing page contains sales and promotional copy as well. Notice the use of bullet points in the sample copy. They make copy easy to scan and absorb. Often the designer will indicate where bullet points should be placed, but the copywriter can also make the suggestion.

Here is URIM's landing page copy:

Busy as a bee? But are you as efficient?

- Get everyone in your hive working together
- Take the guesswork out of inventory tracking and planning
- Eliminate recopying and re-keying orders
- Deliver the right product to the right client, at the right time
- Spend more time growing your business!

The beehive may look like a chaotic site, but it is efficiency in motion.

U-Rent-It Manager (URIM) is a party/event rental and small equipment rental order-entry and reservation system that can bring bee-like efficiency to your business.

With online inventory tracking, and sales and order calculations, URIM will have you buzzing with excitement.

Remove the guesswork

URIM takes the guesswork out of inventory tracking and planning and

eliminates the need to recopy or re-enter orders. URIM includes contact manager and marketing functions and a “one-button click” to export accounting data to QuickBooks.

URIM is a cost-effective way to combat chaos and introduce order to your rental business. It saves you time and makes your hive a more productive place.

Designed with input from the party/event and small equipment rental industry, and fully supported by phone, email, and online, URIM is an intuitive application that will have you seeing positive results in hours.

Right product, right person, right time

Get the right product to the right person at the right time. Generate increased customer satisfaction and repeat business. Create more time to expand your business. Produce more honey. Now that’s sweet!

Hive in Action: URIM Features and Benefits

Free Taste of Rental Manager: Download Demo

Build Your Hive: Purchase URIM

Notice the hotlinks at the end of the landing page copy. If readers want to know more, they can click on features and benefits. If they want to try the product at no charge, they can. If they want to buy, they can do that too. On the demo page, prospects find guarantees and other trust-building copy. On all the pages, they find links back to the landing page and links to all the other pages.

Here is some copy from Hive in Action: URIM Features and Benefits page:

Transform your business into a hive of productivity

“When I finally decided to update my 20-year-old ‘computerized’ system, I went looking for a cost-efficient, integrated rental order-entry and reservation system from a supplier who was readily available for support, if I needed it. I have found all this with URIM.” - Gord Robinson, WeRentIt

With URIM in place, your business will still be a hive of activity. But all activity will be focused on meeting and exceeding customer expectations, generating repeat business, and growing your business. Use URIM to:

- Become more organized and productive, better manage workload, and keep the customer satisfied
- Reserve inventory for specific time periods
- Receive alerts if you are about to over-book items
- Reserve any special equipment needed for set-up
- Produce quotes without reserving inventory
- Convert quotes into orders with a “one-button click”
- Enter separate billing and shipping addresses on forms
- Confirm and send quotes and orders by email
- Print delivery and pick-up forms to expedite delivery
- Better manage receivables and analyze sales
- Include tax exemptions and discounts on invoices
- Calculate overall sales automatically

Free Taste of Rental Manager: Download Demo

Build Your Hive: Purchase URIM

URIM: Getting Started [Note: Takes reader to landing page]

In short, the kind of thinking that you put into your print DRM material goes into

your web-based DRM landing page:

- What do people need to know before they take the action that you want them to take?
- How can you build trust and confidence?
- What kind of incentive can you offer to entice them to take action while they are on the site?

When you write for the web, you want to make it as easy as possible for readers to scan and absorb your copy. That means writing shorter sentences and paragraphs, using bold headers and bullet points when and where appropriate. (These same principles can be applied to print-based DRM brochures as well.)

Chapter 12: Appendices

APPENDIX I: Promote My Apple

I suspect by now you know all you need to know before you start to advertise this apple. But just in case you don't, let's review. And remember, as you scroll through the list, knowing something doesn't mean you have to use it.

Before I advertise this apple, before I even begin to write the copy, I need to know:

- What type of apple is it?
- What does it taste like?
- How was it grown (for instance, is it organic)?
- What is it used for (eating, baking and so on)?
- Specific attributes (features) and their related benefits.
- What differentiates this apple from others on the market (USP)?
- How much does it cost?
- How is it sold (individually, by the pound or dozen, by the bushel)?
- Where can I buy it?
- Where do I go for more information?
- What is happening in the business environment that might influence the promotional message?
- Who is the target market?

- - Your copy would change dramatically based on the target market. For instance, how would your copy change if you were targeting: mothers with young kids, mothers with teens, health-conscious adults (men and/or women), people on diets, institutions (schools or retirement homes), independent bakers, industrial bakers, other industrial users (companies that make apple juice, for instance) and so on?
- What is the purpose of the ad—to sell, to raise brand awareness?
- What incentives can we offer to motivate action?

And that is it, as far as this book is concerned.

I hope you found the contents useful and informative and that the information in this book helps you with your next direct response marketing project, be it a letter, email message, brochure or website landing page.

If you have any comments, feel free to email me: info@paullima.com. While I am not able to guarantee a reply, I read all email and do try to reply to email that I receive.

You can read a bit about me and my other book below.

All the best with your DRM writing!

Chapter 13: About the Author

Based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Paul Lima has worked as a professional writer and communications instructor since 1980. He is also the author of 10 books on freelance and business writing.

Paul has worked as an advertising copywriter, continuing education manager and magazine editor. Since 1988, he has run a successful freelance writing, copywriting and writing training business.

Paul writes print and web-based copy and promotional material for corporate clients. In addition, he has written about small business and technology issues for The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, National Post, CBC.ca, among many other publications. For more information, visit www.paullima.com.

Additional books by Paul Lima

Paul is the author of a number of books on writing and the business of freelance writing:

- Fundamentals of Writing: How to Write Articles, Media Releases, Case Studies, Blog Posts and Social Media Content
- How To Write A Non-Fiction Book in 60 Days
- Say it Right: How to Write Speeches and Presentations
- Produce, Price and Promote Your Self-Published Fiction or Non-fiction Book and eBook
- Everything You Wanted to Know About Freelance Writing - Find, Price, Manage Corporate Writing Assignments & Develop Article Ideas and Sell Them

to Newspapers and Magazines

- The Six-Figure Freelancer: How to Find, Price and Manage Corporate Writing Assignments
- Business of Freelance Writing: How to Develop Article Ideas and Sell Them to Newspapers and Magazines
- Harness the Business Writing Process: Email, Letters, Proposals, Reports, Media Releases, Web Content
- Harness the Email Writing Process: How to Become a More Effective and Efficient Email Writer
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